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THE STALINIST THEORY OF COLONIAL REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL
LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN TROPICAL AND SOUTH AFRICA

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FOREWORD

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Following is the translation of an article by I.I.
Potekhin in Sovetskaya Etnografiya, No. 1, Moscow,
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The second stage in the development of the national problem begins with the epoch of imperialism. Leading capitalist powers occupy colonies and become multi-national, colonial empires. In that manner the national problem developed into a colonial or a national-colonial problem, i.e. into a problem pertaining to the liberation of the colonial peoples and of the dependent countries from imperialist oppression. Formerly the national problem was an internal governmental problem, whereas at the present time it is an inter-state and a world problem; the national problem became a part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The opportunist trends and the theoreticians of the II International did not want to notice this radical change in the development of the national problem. Lenin and Stalin were the first ones to discover the relationship of the national problem with the problem pertaining to colonies, established a theoretical foundation for that relationship and made it the basis for the revolutionary activity of the proletariat.

"Formerly the national problem was usually limited by a tight circle of questions pertaining principally to 'cultured' nationalities. The Irish, Hungarians, Poles, the Finnish people, the Serbians and certain other European nationalities--this is the group of peoples who do not enjoy full civil rights and whose fate interested the members of the II International. Tens and hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African people, who are suffering national oppression in its most oppressive and cruel form, usually remained beyond their field of vision. They hesitated to place the blacks, the 'cultured' and the 'uncultured' into the same category....At the present time such duality and half-way policies in the national problem may be considered as having been liquidated. Leninism exposed this glaring incongruity, destroyed the wall between the whites and the blacks, between Europeans and Asians, between the 'cultured' and 'uncultured' slaves of imperialism and thereby tied the national problem to the colonial problem. In that manner the

national problem was transformed from a private and an internal governmental one to a common and an international one; it was transformed into a world problem pertaining to the liberation of the oppressed people of the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism." / See Note. /

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya (Works), Vol. 6, pages 138-139.

The great master of dialectic materialism, the coryphaeus of science, I.V. Stalin, developed an orderly and a strictly scientific theory of colonial revolution that was basically outlined by V.I. Lenin.

The Stalinist theory of colonial revolution bases itself on the fact that the resolution of the colonial problem, the liberation of the oppressed people from colonial enslavement, is impossible without a proletarian revolution and an overthrow of imperialism.

A "theory" asserting that it is possible to liquidate the colonial system without destroying the capitalist system of production became widely popular with the bourgeois intelligentsia of the colonial countries. Orizu, a Nigerian, in a book entitled "Without Bitterness," subjects the British colonial policy to sharp criticism, and demands the Nigeria be granted independence and at the same time expresses his opinion in favor of preserving the basis of capitalism. Goshal, an Indian, in a book entitled "The People in the Colonies" criticizes the colonial imperialist system in general, demands its immediate liquidation and considers such a liquidation impossible without a liquidation of capitalism in the USA, England and other countries.

It is easy to see that the class basis of the "theory" propounded by Orizu and Goshala is in the interest of the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries. The country would like to achieve independence, i.e. the possibility for an independent government for its own country, to preserve the inviolability of the capitalist system of production, and to avoid radical democratic transformations. The theoretical basis of such a point of view is in fact Kautsky's concept of imperialism.

Goshal cites G.A. Gobson's definition as a "classic" definition of imperialism, which, according to V.I. Lenin, was based on the point of view that was essentially homogenous to the one held by Kautsky. Kautsky isolated the policy of imperialism from its economy, and contended that monopolies in an economy are compatible with a non-monopolistic and a non-aggressive method of political operation.

V.I. Lenin and I.V. Stalin, basing themselves on the scientific theory of imperialism, consider that the overthrow of capitalism and the destruction of the colonial system are two aspects of the same task.

"History indicates that the only way of destroying national inequality, the only way of establishing a regime of fraternal

cooperation among the toiling masses of both the oppressed and the unoppressed countries--is the liquidation of capitalism and the establishment of a soviet system," / see Note / said I.V. Stalin at the 10th Congress of the Party in 1921.

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya, Vol. 5, page 38.

The almost three decades that have elapsed since then served as an excellent substantiation of Stalin's contentions. In the USSR not only was national oppression liquidated in all of its forms, but also the actual inequality among the nations along with the liquidation of capitalism and the building of a socialist society. As a result of the victory won by socialism in our multi-national Soviet country, each nation, small or large, feels itself quite at home, no one oppresses it or bullies it, and all the nations form a unified friendly family engaged in the common task of building communism!

Whereas national colonial oppression in countries which form a part of the imperialist system did not slacken at all but became every more cruel and unbearable, Imperialism cannot exist without the enslavement of one group of countries by another group, the enslavement of the weak by the strong. The principle of equal rights among all races and nations, an ideology of friendship among peoples is alien to the exploiting classes.

It therefore follows, teaches comrade Stalin "that the national and the colonial problems are inseparable from the problem pertaining to a liberation from the power wielded by capital," that "nations without rights as well as the colonies cannot be liberated without an elimination of the power of capital." / See Note. /

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya, Vol. 5, pages 56-57.

The struggle waged by the oppressed colonial peoples and by the dependent countries merges with the struggle of the proletariat of the metropolitan areas of all the leading capitalist countries against imperialism, for a dictatorship of the proletariat, and for socialism. On the other hand, however, inasmuch as the colonies are the rear guard, the reserve of imperialism, the proletariat of the leading capitalist countries cannot attain a firm victory over imperialism without the liberation of the colonies.

The following important contention of the Leninist-Stalinist theory of colonial revolution stems from that:

"The interests of the proletarian movement in the developed countries and the national liberation movement in the colonies demand a unification of these two types of revolutionary movements into a common front set against the common enemy, against imperialism." / See Note. /

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya, Vol. 6, page 145.

The metropolitan communist parties, basing themselves on that contention, have in the past and especially at the present time, during the period following the Second World War, extended all types of assistance to the development of the national liberation movement in the colonies. The French Communist Party, for example, extended and continues to extend considerable and very

valuable assistance to the anti-imperialist movement in the French colonies in Africa.

At the present time the national liberation movement of the colonial peoples is an organic part of the entire anti-imperialist, democratic camp, which is headed by the Soviet Union. That is clearly evident even in the case of backward Africa, to say nothing of certain more highly developed colonies and dependent countries.

The trade unions in Africa are members of the International Federation of Trade Unions and send their delegates to its congresses. The youth organizations of Africa are also members of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Hey Abul'ye, a member of the executive committee of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, is a representative of the young people of Africa. The last student and democratic youth festival in Budapest included the participation of representatives from African youth organizations. The democratic organizations of Africa took part in the World Congress of the Partisans of Peace in Paris, representatives from Africa were elected to membership in the Permanent Committee of the Congress. The vice-president of that committee, Gabriel D'Arbusier, who visited Moscow during the All-Union Conference of the Partisans of Peace, is the secretary general of the Democratic Amalgamation of Africa. African women's organizations are members of the World Democratic Federation of Women. African women participated, in the capacity of guests, in the conference of the countries of Asia, which took place recently in liberated China.

"No longer can anything isolate the African people from the democratic camp," stated the representative of African youth at the 2nd Congress of the World Federation of Democratic Youth at Budapest.

The next important contention of the Stalinist theory of colonial revolution is the requirement to make a strict distinction "between a revolution in the imperialist countries, in countries oppressing other peoples, and revolutions in colonial or dependent countries, countries that are suffering from the imperialist oppression by other countries. Revolution in the imperialist countries is unique--there the bourgeoisie is the oppressor of other peoples, there it is counter-revolutionary during all stages of the revolution; the national movement, as part of the struggle for liberation, does not exist. Revolution in the colonial and the dependent countries is something else: there the oppression by imperialism of the other countries is one of the factors causing a revolution; there such oppression cannot avoid involving the national bourgeoisie as well; there, the national bourgeoisie during a certain stage and for a certain period of time can support the revolutionary movement of its country in opposition to imperialism; there the national movement, as a movement during the struggle for liberation, is a phase of the revolution.

"Not to make this distinction, to fail to understand this difference, to identify a revolution in the imperialist countries

with a revolution in colonial countries--means to stray from the path of Marxism, from the path of Leninism, to get on a path of the partisans of the II International." / See Note. /

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya, Vol. 10, pages 10-11.

A very important deduction follows from this contention, pertaining to the special strategic stage of the colonial revolution--a stage of nationwide anti-imperialist front, during the period when the national bourgeoisie still supports the revolutionary movement.

That, of course, does not mean that this stage does not contain contradictions between the proletariat, the broad working masses on one hand, and the national bourgeoisie on the other hand. The bourgeoisie supports the revolutionary movement of the national masses only to be able to exploit the fruits of the revolution and to seize political power in order to enslave and suppress the national masses of its country. This stage of a nationwide front is possible only in those areas and at a time when the proletariat is still not manifesting itself as an independent and a decisive force, as an antipode to the national bourgeoisie, where the proletariat is not yet capable of leading the struggle of the non-proletarian working masses.

In appearing before the students of the Communist University of the Workers in 1925 at Vladivostok, comrade Stalin pointed out that "with the growth of the revolutionary movement the national bourgeoisie of such countries splits into two parts: into a revolutionary group (the petty bourgeoisie) and into a conciliating group (the prominent bourgeoisie), of which the first group carries on a revolutionary struggle, whereas the second one enters into a coalition with imperialism." He warned that the prominent national bourgeoisie can support the revolutionary movement in its country in opposition to imperialism only during a certain stage and for a limited period of time, and that fearing the revolution more than it fears imperialism, and being concerned for its financial interests, more than for the interests of its own country, it will eventually "form an alliance with imperialism against the workers and the peasants of its own country." / See Note. /

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya, Vol. 7, page 148.

The events that followed fully substantiated comrade Stalin's foresight. The experience of the Chinese revolution indicated that a nationwide front was possible only during its first stage when the revolution was principally directed against foreign imperialism. Prominent national bourgeoisie entered into a coalition with imperialism, after the development of the workers' and peasants' movement, and after the revolution acquired the characteristics of an agrarian revolution.

Not only the Chinese bourgeoisie, but the prominent bourgeoisie of India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Egypt and of a number of other colonies and dependent countries has already turned against the national interests of their countries and shifted to the side of imperialism.

Comrade Stalin has warned, and the past quarter century fully bears him out, that a complete and final victory of a colonial revolution is possible only under the direction of the proletariat. The petty bourgeois and nationalist organizations and parties have already demonstrated their inability to defend the matter of national liberation. They tend to limit themselves with constitutional reforms, with the acquisition of a formal, bourgeois democratism, which does not assure and is incapable of assuring a complete detachment from the imperialist system, and cannot guarantee actual freedom, but only a formal freedom. Only the working class, heading the national front of all the anti-imperialist forces, is capable of carrying out a consistent struggle for independence and profound democratic reorganizations, that satisfy the interests of a great majority of the people.

The victory attained by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia was the start of the crises being experienced by the imperialist colonial system. It demonstrated a new socialist method for resolving the national problem, it inspired the oppressed colonial people and those of the dependent countries, awakened them and prompted them to action. In evaluating the international significance of the October Revolution comrade Stalin, in his article entitled, "The International Nature of the October Revolution" / See Note / pointed out:

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya, Vol. 10, page 245.

"The era of revolutionary liberation movements in the colonies and dependent countries has arrived, an era rousing the proletariat of all the countries, an era of its hegemony in the revolution."

This, in very broad terms, is the theory of colonial revolution evolved by comrade Stalin. To a Soviet ethnographer studying the colonial peoples and the people of the colonial countries, it is a guide to action.

A Soviet ethnographer cannot study the ethnography of the colonial people without referring to the national liberation movement of these people. He cannot do that first of all because he considers it a duty of the Soviet scientist to fully cooperate through his research work with the struggle waged by the progressive forces against the forces of imperialist reaction. He cannot do that, in the second place, because the distribution of the class forces in the national liberation movement in the backward colonies is the sole criteria for acquiring a proper understanding of complex social processes that are taking place within the society enslaved by the imperialistic policy carried out by the society of the colonial peoples.

A profound comprehension of the problem of the national liberation movement of such backward countries as Africa, for example, is impossible without an ethnographic investigation. The primitive-community order is still preserved there in a decaying stage, the exploiting classes of landowners and capitalists have

not yet formed, the working class is forming there in a very peculiar manner. At the same time the native society is already not a monolithic, homogenous one, it is split into class and social layers, that occupy their own individual positions in the struggle against imperialism.

In order to be able to penetrate into the problems of the national liberation movement, it is necessary to know the distribution of the class forces in such a movement and for that purpose it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the economic nature and the social-political demeanor of all the class and social layers of the modern native society. This is a job for the ethnographer, as long as we are dealing with backward colonies that still preserve the tribal order.

What does the tribal chief of some present day African tribe represent--a tribe such as the Kikuyu or the Masai tribe? What about, for example, Sepinari Kama, the tribal chief of the Bamangwato tribe, or Ofori Atta, chief of the Omanhene Ashanti tribe?

They are representatives of the people, that personify the so-called primitive democracy--we are constantly told by the bourgeois ethnographers. Such a characterization of the tribal chiefs is also supported by a certain portion of African intelligentsia that originated from the aristocratic summit. In actual fact such a chief in most cases is a feudal or a semi-feudal person who collects rent from the peasants and trades in the manpower of the colonial slaves, the members of his own tribe. It is true that such a chief is not the common type of feudal leader, but quite a peculiar version of that category. His control of the tribal land is limited, he is in a political and economic bondage of imperialism and the colonial government, he hides his feudal essence by the worn vestiges of tribal democracy, but all this does not prevent him from exploiting his tribal relatives by means of more or less typical feudal methods of exploitation.

Not all the tribal chiefs are the same, and not all of them are in the same position. It is necessary to distinguish between tribal chiefs whose land was expropriated by the colonizers, and those chiefs whose lands have not yet been partitioned. Along with the wealthy and influential tribal chiefs, who own not only wealthy homes of the European type of eastern harems and automobiles, there is a mass of petty, tribal chiefs abused by the colonial government, who by virtue of their position, and standard of living differ very little from the rank and file of their own tribe. African ethnographers must furnish an economic and a social-political characterization of the various groups forming this aristocratic summit of the African society.

Not all tribal chiefs occupy identical position in the struggle against imperialism. A certain group of tribal chiefs is still allied with the people in their stand against imperialism, whereas another group forms a reliable social support for imperialism in the African colonies.

Prior to the First World War, before the start of the crisis being experienced by the imperialist colonial system, the leading role in the people's anti-imperialist movement was performed by the aristocratic summit of the African society, by the tribal chiefs, the various emirs and sultans. The African National Congress in South Africa, the Society for the Protection of the Civil Rights of the Aborigines in West Africa and other similar organizations in other parts of the continent, headed people's movements and at the same time exerted pressure on them attempting to keep them within the bounds of colonial legality. The first resolution adopted by the African National Congress, for example, was a resolution in which the Congress renounced the workers' strike and condemned it as a "violation" of order in the colony.

After the First World War and the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia the young national bourgeoisie and the national intelligentsia began to gradually assert itself. Such organizations as the Nigerian Democratic Party, the Young Citizens of Senegal, the Young Members of the Dagomba Tribe and others began to form. At the same time a communist party was organized in South Africa, which opened an era of the leadership of the proletariat in the national liberation movement.

During the period between the two world wars great changes took place in the African countries. The workers' class increased in numbers due to the development of the mining and in certain countries (Union of South Africa) of the processing industries, as well as due to better means of transportation and an increase in the number of plantations. The native population of the cities and industrial centers increased and acted as organizing centers for the national liberation movement. The national bourgeoisie, even though it still remains small in number and economically weak, entered the arena of independent political action. The national intelligentsia also showed a marked increase, a democratic press made its appearance and the national awareness of the people became stronger.

Prior to the First World War, the British, and even more so, the French and German colonial authorities completely disregarded or paid little attention to the traditional institutions of the native society. They preserved the power held by certain local overlords, such as, for example, the moslem emirs and sultans in Nigeria, the kabakas in Buganda, the supreme leader of Barotseland and so on, transforming them into their puppets, and the "governments" into an auxiliary apparatus of the colonial administration. But they did not pay any attention to the necessity of preserving the old tribal organization and were destroying it with their policies. They transformed the tribal chiefs into "messenger boys" for the European colonial functionaries, they paid no attention to the tradition principle of succession among the chiefs and elders. The missionaries were hard at work attempting to destroy "paganism," polygamy and so on, the mainstays of the old tribal organization

were being undermined.

The beginning of the crisis of the colonial system revealed the dangers of such a policy for imperialism. The colonial governments are changing their policies, they are transferring to a policy designed to preserve the tribal system of organization, to restore and protect it, and to consolidate the traditional power of the tribal chiefs, in order to gain social support for themselves. The tribal chiefs remain the executors of the will of the colonial functionaries, but attempts are now made to grant them a social position and authority: they are paid a wage, superficial respect is shown towards them and so on. Measures are being undertaken to preserve communal land ownership as the basic economic basis of the tribal chiefs.

But the colonial authorities achieved results that were quite opposite to what they had expected of such a policy. The preservation of a tribal organization, characteristic of a primitive-communal order, is impossible under the capitalist system. Land expropriations and mass migrations of the people, a growing urban population and the expansion of an industrial proletariat, the expansion of the commodity economy and material inequality in the tribal community--all this is incompatible with a continued existence of the old institutions of the tribal-community system. The family and especially the tribal organization is becoming more and more an empty shell that does not suit the new conditions. All the bourgeois investigators point out the mass phenomena as an aspiration to shed the tribal ties, traditions and rules. Tribal isolation is disintegrating. The large plantations, road building projects, the cities and industrial centers include people from different tribes who gather, work and live together. Tribal differences and the sense of alienation, as well as the differences in dialects all disappear--a common language is evolved and a new culture is created. Class and national organizations are formed that contain no tribal distinctions: trade unions, organizations of national intelligentsia, sports organizations and others. A combined struggle against the entrepreneurs and the colonial administration results in an understanding of the common interests, that surpass the family or tribal interests. The tribal society is dying out, it is being replaced by a national society. At the same time the policy conducted by the colonial government of relying on the aristocratic summit of the native society and on the tribal chiefs for support undermined their influence on the masses of people. Tribal chiefs find it necessary to rely on the colonial police with increasing frequency in the execution of their administrative functions, thereby placing themselves in opposition to the rank and file tribal masses as the representatives of an alien and unfriendly force.

During the period between the two world wars the aristocratic summit of the native society isolated itself more and more from the liberation movement and drew closer to imperialism. After the Second

World War this aristocratic summit began to hinder the liberation movement and now stands with the colonial authorities against its own people in many of the colonies. In Nigeria it has already on two occasions declined a suggestion made by the United National Convention to organize a movement to restrain the European speculators and to lower prices, and when that movement reached a stage of mass unrest, they sent a telegram to the British king expressing their obedience and devotion to him.

At the present time, however, the influence of the aristocratic summit on the national masses has been undermined. The dissatisfaction of the masses of people with the treacherous policy conducted by the tribal chiefs and by the entire aristocratic summit is increasing from day to day. In some areas this dissatisfaction was manifested by open demonstrations of the masses of people against their feudal masters. In 1948 there was an uprising in Sierra Leone against the supreme leader of the Po region, and the British authorities sent troops to save their puppet. In the course of the same year the people of Egbalenda (Nigeria) banished their own king; the British authorities were afraid to risk an armed intervention, and an attempt to reconcile the people with their king resulted in failure. The people of Buganda rose in an open struggle against their kabaka on two occasions--in 1945 and in 1949.

The colonial authorities are alarmed by a decrease in the prestige and influence of the tribal chiefs. In essence this signals the end of the policy of indirect control. At the present time an animated discussion on the problem pertaining to the strengthening of the power of tribal chiefs is a favorite subject of the colonial periodicals. The isolation of the aristocratic summit from the people is the greatest factor in the development of the national liberation movement in Africa.

The leading role in the national liberation movement in most of the colonies of Tropical and South Africa is now performed by the national bourgeoisie and the national intelligentsia.

The problem pertaining to the national bourgeoisie in Africa is the one that is least developed and most controversial. Several years ago people argued about whether there is such a thing as the national bourgeoisie in the colonies of Tropical and South Africa. At the present time such arguments are no longer heard. Everyone now recognizes that the national bourgeoisie does exist, but the economic and the social-political demeanor of this bourgeoisie still remains hazy.

The crux of the matter is that there is no industrial national bourgeoisie: the imperialists do not permit the development of the processing industry, and the mining industry is a monopoly of large European and American companies. Foreign and even the domestic trade is also mainly controlled by monopolies. Means for accumulating capital available to the national bourgeoisie are very limited. But the national bourgeoisie does exist and is growing.

The largest bourgeois group is composed of traders who operate in the name of and on assignment from foreign firms. Along with the traders we also encounter owners of large cotton, coco, and coffee plantations, owners of income property, owners of various types of shops and so on. Among this group of exploiters we encounter tribal chiefs and refugees from the rank and file mass of peasants. So far we know of only a few examples, the problem in general remains unstudied.

What layers of the population give rise to the national bourgeoisie? What are the means for acquiring capital? What specific methods for exploiting the masses does it employ? What is its position in society? All these questions remain to be answered, and the solution is to a great degree associated with the problem pertaining to the disintegration of the tribal community. With a complete lack of statistical material about class differentiation of the population the answer to these questions may be obtained only after a thorough ethnographic analysis; only an ethnographer with his specific method of investigation is capable of untangling the complex labyrinth of present day social relationships in the African society.

In the struggle against imperialist enslavement, the interests of the bourgeoisie coincide with those of the entire people. But at the same time it cannot fail to take into consideration the contradiction of its narrow class interests with the interests of the toiling masses. Nwafor Orizu, for example, calls for a struggle for the independence and democratization of Nigeria, and at the same time expresses his views against universal suffrage. He criticizes the viewpoints held by that portion of the intelligentsia, which asserts that in a democratic Nigeria there will be no difference in wealth and origin among the people, that voting is "everyone's right and that anyone can hold office." Benjamin Futa Ofey, editor of the Daily Spectator newspaper (Gold Coast), defends the viewpoint of the colonial authorities, which states that the people are allegedly not yet ready for universal suffrage. The anti-communist hysteria of the colonial press and of the colonial authorities in Africa, which has now acquired great scope, is designed to frighten the local petty bourgeoisie and to isolate it from a unified national front. The dichotomous position of the national bourgeoisie of the colonies is beginning to be felt in Africa: in heading the democratic forces it strives to retain the movement within a framework of colonial legality. It is possible to get a clear picture of the position held by the national bourgeoisie by looking at the situation in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, where the national bourgeoisie is developed more than in Tropical and South Africa.

In Nigeria the largest and most influential organization is the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. The National Council was created at the end of the war as an organization of a single national front, amalgamating all the other national and

workers' organizations. The Council is headed by the native intelligentsia, that is grouped around Nnadi Azikive. He is a very interesting and at the same time a very influential figure. He was born in 1904 in an aristocratic family: his father was employed as a functionary with the colonial administration in a number of Nigerian cities. In 1924 Azikive went to the USA to study, where he lived for 10 years and graduated from Lincoln University. After returning to Nigeria he organized a publishing house called Zik Press, which he still heads at the present time. He wrote a number of books, one of which, "The Re-Birth of Africa," is known in Nigeria as the "bible of the West African youth." He created his own system of philosophy which is called "a universal philosophy" and which in essence is a colonial edition of the reactionary American philosophy of pragmatism. Azikive is very influential; he is known as the Ghandi of Africa.

The basic content of the movement headed by the National Council is the struggle for a review of the constitution of the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council under the colonial governor, actually has no legislative powers whatever, since all of its decisions are subject to the governor's approval. By establishing that Council the British authorities intended to create an appearance of self-determination, a reliable camouflage of the imperialist domination, and to narrow the gap between them and the aristocratic summit of the native society.

After the Second World War the Labor government of England, in "complying" with a promise granted during the war to grant Nigeria democratic self rule, introduced a new constitution in 1946.

According to that constitution one half of the members of the Council consist of Europeans--colonial officials and businessmen, the other half consists of representatives of the local population. Out of that group only four members are elected by the population of the cities of Lagos and Kalabar by means of elections that are limited by strict income qualification requirements. The remaining 21 members are elected by means of a very complicated multi-stage system by the aristocratic summit from among its own ranks.

The new constitution was received with indignation by the democratic part of the Nigerian population. A four member delegation from the cities of Lagos and Kalabar, led by Nnandi Azikive, refused to participate in the first session of the Legislative Council and appealed with a suggestion to the representatives of the aristocratic summit to do likewise, but the latter declined to participate in the boycott. Then the National Council of Nigeria appealed to the people. A wave of meetings and demonstrations rolled across the entire country. A delegation was sent to London demanding the repeal of the constitution and an introduction of realistic democratic self-government in the name of 30 million Nigerians, but as could be expected, it received a categorical refusal. The reports of the delegation on the negotiations with

the British government resulted in a renewed upsurge of the people's movement.

A hail of repressions was unleashed on the democratic organizations. A campaign of slander against Azikive and his followers was started. In order to deprive the growing movement of its leadership, the British authorities employed a tested method used by the slave owners--"divide and rule." The most active force of the movement are the Yoruba and Ibo people, eight million strong. Azikive belongs to the Ibo people. The British agents propounded a provocative slogan among the Yoruba people: "The Yoruba people are threatened with a political enslavement by the Ibo people." This resembled a situation where a thief, who in trying to escape from his pursuers, yells "Stop the thief?"

The British agents managed to split the Yoruba people. Two organizations made their appearance: "Society of the Sons of the Great King Oduduwa" headed by the aristocratic summit, which stood in opposition to the National Council, and a democratic organization called "The Yoruba Federal Union," that supported the National Council. The British agents failed to weaken the national democratic movement.

The British government was compelled to revert to new maneuvers: it created a committee to work out a new constitution and transferred the entire leadership of the National Council under its jurisdiction. The creation of that committee is a very indicative fact. Three years after the introduction of the constitution it became necessary to create a committee to work out a new constitution; this serves as evidence of serious tension in the political situation in Nigeria.

By transferring the leadership of the National Council to the committee, the British authorities planned to isolate it from the people's movement and to force it to engage in fruitless discussions in the committee under the direction of the British colonial officials. The Azikive group did not agree to this constitutional trap. The Azikive group worked out its own draft of the constitution, which stipulates an expansion of democratic self-government in Nigeria, but within the framework of the British empire and with the preservation of British domination. In connection with the execution of the striking miners at Enugu in December of 1949, Azikive announced: "I am a partisan of peaceful means of achieving independence for Nigeria." The ideology and the policies of the Azikive group are those of a petty bourgeois national reform.

An organization representing a unified national front called "The Unified Gold Coast Convention" was organized on the Gold Coast in 1947. The president of the convention was a 70 year old merchant, an exporter of cocoa and lumber, George Alfred Grant; the vice-president was Doctor Dankwa, the brother of supreme leader Ofori Atta, an author of a number of books, a journalist, and an editor of a number of newspapers, and a member of the Legislative Council. The Convention demanded that the Gold Coast be granted

its independence "as soon as possible."

Britain "granted" the Gold Coast a new constitution, similar to the Nigerian constitution. The United Convention adopted a resolution to boycott the Legislative Council, elected according to the new constitution. For that purpose a conference was held with the supreme tribal leaders, but the latter refused to support the Convention's suggestions.

At the beginning of 1948 the Convention organized a mass movement to curb the European speculators and to lower prices. The nucleus of the movement consisted of demobilized soldiers. The movement enveloped the cities of Accra, Kumasi, Akyuz and other cities. Demonstrations and meetings took place everywhere (one of the meetings at Accra included the participation of 9,000 persons), leaflets were distributed, in a number of areas the people destroyed European stores. Demands were presented: assistance for the demobilized, freedom for the political prisoners, and a decrease in prices. The first that was opened on a peaceful demonstration heading for the governor's papace, as a result of which, even according to official information some 26 persons were killed and 242 wounded, caused violent indignation throughout the colony. Troops were brought from Nigeria in order to restore "order."

In order to weaken the growing movement the British authorities decided to detract the Convention's attention to constitutional reforms. It was charged with the organization of a committee to develop a new constitution. The trick worked. The committee was created, it was joined by the Convention leaders who became scared of the mass movement as much as they were scared of British imperialists. The leaders of the Convention were clearly heading for closer ties with the British authorities. Dankva published a pamphlet entitled "Friendship and the Empire," in which he plays up to British imperialism, asserting that Britain has changed its attitude towards the colonies and that the former slogan of the Convention--"independence as soon as possible"--must be relegated to the archives. The British colonial magazine called "West Africa" recommends that this pamphlet be distributed throughout the Gold Coast "as much as possible." In the constitutional committee Dankva defended the interests of the tribal chiefs which were contrary to those of the people. "He believes in democracy, but a democracy directed by the tribal chiefs,"--this is the way British imperialist press summarized Dankva's views on democracy. As a result of such an evolution in the leadership of the Convention towards the right, the Convention split; the People's Party was formed, headed by a former secretary of the convention, Kwame Nkrumah. The People's Party relies on the support of the workers' trade unions; on its initiative a mass democratic youth organization was created on the Gold Coast, which joined the World Federation of Democratic Youth. The Nigerian and Gold Coast workers' classes are not in the arena of independent political action, but the

example of these two colonies once again demonstrates that the only force capable of rousing and leading the people in the struggle for independence is the workers' class.

The workers' class of Africa is already quite large; it has grown considerably during the past several years, but it is still young and has not acquired the necessary experience in political work. The imperialist powers are conducting a policy that hinders the formation of permanent workers' cadres in cities and industrial centers. The absolute majority of Africans working in the mining industry and on the plantations consists of refugees, peasants, working under a temporary contract. The very low wages, the absence of quarters at the mines for workers with families and the police restrictions concerning the presence of women in cities and workers' settlements deprive the temporary workers of a possibility to become a permanent worker, and an inhabitant of the city. Millions of people live a "nomad" type of life without any real means of subsistence; driven by the colonial authorities the peasant leaves for the mines to earn a living, works there for a year or a year and a half and returns to his family in the village for several months and then again signs a contract. Despite such an imperialist policy there already is a permanent backbone of the working class, that organizes and consolidates the temporary workers.

Workers' trade unions made their appearance in Africa after the First World War, but there are very few of them and they wield very little power. The colonial authorities were compelled to recognize the existence of trade unions and to permit their organization only after the Second World War, and even then not in all parts of the continent. After the Second World War the workers of the African colonies with the active assistance of the World Federation of Trade Unions, created a mass trade union movement. At the present time there is not a single colony of any significance that does not contain a workers' trade union. Trade union centers that form a part of the World Federation of Trade Unions were formed in a number of colonies. The power of the trade union movement in the British colonies is weakened by the treacherous activities of the agents of the British congress of trade unions.

The Union of South Africa has the oldest trade union movement on the African continent and most highly organized one, but it remains split on a racial basis to this day. The reformist leaders of trade unions composed of European workers continue to refuse to accept native workers for membership in their trade unions. The native workers, with the assistance of the Communist Party of South Africa created their own trade unions and their own trade union center. During recent years there has been a movement among the European workers of South Africa for the creation of unified trade unions, but the race barrier in the workers' movement still exists.

In other British colonies the trade unions are strongly influenced by the British congress of trade unions: the colonies have laborite advisers for the trade union movement, local trade

union leaders are trained in London, where they are inculcated with the abhorrent trade unionist traditions. "The way in which to avoid the appearance of African politicians is to welcome the appearance of African Bevins"--this is the laborite policy on the labor movement in Africa as interpreted by an organ of the British imperialists, "The African World." As far as the British trade union advisers in Africa are concerned, the Colonial Minister Crich Jones, in appearing at the House of Commons, called on the British and American entrepreneurs in Africa not to fear them, since, according to the Minister, "the trade union advisers are not involved in politics at all....They do their work with complete impartiality to the special interests of both the employers and the employees." What this "impartiality" actually means is reflected by the colonial profit figures of the British companies.

Under the direction of such advisers the trade unions are organized not on the basis of industry or shop, which leads to a dissemination of the working class forces. The Nigerian trade union congress, for example, in 1946 headed 50 unions with a total of 42,000 members, which comes to an average of 700 members per union. A similar situation exists on the Gold Coast, in Gambia and Sierra Leone. On the Gold Coast, at the beginning of 1949, along with a miners' union which had 15,000 members, there were nine unions each of which had fewer than 50 members. The British advisers try to prevent the trade unions from participating in the democratic movement, try to limit their activities to a struggle for economic demands.

During the postwar period the African workers' movement is undergoing a severe school of struggle. Prompted by American expansionists and the growing economic crisis, the British, French and Belgian imperialists are conducting a wide scale offense on the vital interests of the African workers. The cost of living is steadily rising, the wages are "frozen" at their former starvation level. Strikes, which occur contrary to the orders given by the trade union advisers, are now a frequent occurrence. Violent police terror is incapable of suppressing the struggle, which is conducted literally for a piece of bread; it forces the fighters to consolidate and unite their organizations.

The degree of participation of the working class in the democratic, anti-imperialist movement in the various colonies, naturally, provides a very multi-colored picture. In a number of colonies especially in areas where there are communist parties, the workers' class is in the front ranks of the national-liberation movement, rousing and involving all the oppressed masses in the struggle. In other colonies the workers' class has not yet formed as an independent and guiding force, but throughout it shows an example of solidarity and organization, its organizational and guiding role is increasing everywhere. A vivid example of the organizing role of the working class is seen in the people's movement in Buganda.

Buganda is one of the oldest countries of Africa; it is believed to have been founded in the 12th century. By mid 14th century Buganda was a highly organized, powerful and blossoming state with a highly developed culture. The British colonizers destroyed its independence and transformed it into one of the five provinces of the Protectorate of Uganda. The population of Buganda is a composite one consisting of the Baganda, a freedom loving people proud of their rich historical heritage. The Baganda people are believed to be one million strong; the European population of Buganda is small; most of the population consists of Arabs and Indians.

Prior to the British colonization Buganda had no concept of private property as far as land was concerned; all the land was considered the property of the head of the state, the kabakas; the peasants used the land on a basis of communal land ownership. The British colonizers established a widespread system of feudal land ownership there, dividing the land among the members of the aristocratic summit of Baganda, transforming it into a point of social support for themselves. At the present time 230 families control three quarters of all the land. Buganda is headed by the biggest landowner, who was educated in Cambridge and appointed as a ruler by the British governor; his name is Mteza II. He has a government consisting of three ministers and a council, lukiko, consisting of feudal nobility. Actual power belongs to the British governor and to his residents; the kabaka and all his organs of power are in reality an auxiliary apparatus of the British governor of the Uganda Protectorate.

The Baganda peasants lost their lands and became tenant farmers totally dependent on their landowners and were subjected to monstrous exploitation. They pay rent with money and produce, they work on the landowners' fields, perform various types of labor obligations for the kabaka, his appointees and for the British colonial administration. Extreme poverty is noted by all impartial observers. Even the official British reports admit that approximately one quarter of the population is suffering from serious diseases as a result of vitamin deficiency.

Buganda was transformed into a British cotton base; the exportation of cotton accounts for three-quarters of total exports. Large cotton plantations belong principally to the local land owners. Most of the seasonal and permanent workers work on their plantations, with the exception of peasants who cultivate a rented shred of land. Hundreds of thousands of hired workers labor at the cotton mills and other enterprises for the primary processing of agricultural raw materials, as well as on the railroads and in motor transportation, and in the ports of Lake Victoria. A large workers' class has already formed in Buganda, which is the initiator and the leader in the struggle waged by the masses of people.

The economic situation in Baganda deteriorated sharply after

the war. All of the postwar years are marked by cotton crop failures, which is the main source of financial income for the peasants of Baganda. The monopolistic companies lower the purchase prices for cotton and unrestrainedly inflate the prices for import commodities, while the colonial administration tightens the tax screws. The widely developed military construction is accompanied by an increase in forced labor. Several thousand Baganda natives were recruited for the construction of a military base in Kenya; people are also being recruited for the building of a railroad in the Sudan, for the building of a hydroelectric power plant on the Nile River and so on.

The people of Baganda no longer want to reconcile themselves with their position as slaves, and are conducting an intensive and determined struggle against the British imperialists, with their agents made up of the local land owners. Strike follows strike. The colonial authorities punish the strikers in a violent manner (execution of workers at the bacon plant and so on), but they are unable to suppress the aspirations of the exhausted people for freedom.

The Buganda workers present economic and political demands that respond to the interests of the entire people; therefore the strikes find a warm support among the masses of people and frequently turn into mass movements. Some remarkable events took place in 1945. A strike that started at one of the enterprises turned into a general strike, the workers were joined by the peasants, combined worker and peasant demonstrations took place throughout the country. The following demands were presented: a change in the composition of the lukiko towards greater democratization, the resignation of the Finance Minister, an increase in wages, and higher cotton prices. A proclamation entitled "Buganda--Our Mother" was distributed among the people. The proclamation warned the people that they are faced by even harder times, if it fails to rise in a struggle for their rights, that such a new "misfortune will be brought to us by our countrymen, whose soul is for sale and who act like traitors."

The people's movement was drowned in blood, but it was so fierce that the colonial authorities considered it necessary to make compromises; several people's representatives were elected to the lukiko.

The movement against British imperialism and its system of native agents developed with renewed zeal in April of 1949. The workers were once again the initiators. The general workers' strike was supported by the peasants. Demands responding to the interests of the entire people were presented: an election of the local organs of power, an increase in the representation of the people in the lukiko, a repeal of control over the sale of peasant produce, which helps the monopolies to rob the peasantry. The kabaka appealed for order, but the people who rose in the struggle

by-passed this appeal by a British puppet. The governor of Uganda summoned troops from Kenya to quell the movement, barricades were erected on the streets of Kampala (capital of Buganda). The people were punished in a very severe manner. The "Daily Worker" some time later published a letter signed "one of the survivors" which was smuggled out of Buganda.

The best organized and stable democratic movement was established after the war with the active assistance of the communist party of France in the French African colonies. The remarkable aspect of that movement is partly the fact that it amalgamates the democratic forces of all of the 11 French colonies in West and Equatorial Africa.

A powerful people's organization was established there in 1946--"The Democratic Union of Africa," which included over two million members during the first part of 1950. That is an organization with many branches and a unified control center. All of its members pay membership dues and carry membership cards. The primary cell of that organization is the city or village sub-section, that unites members living in the same area; a section unites all the organizations of a single colony. The coordinating committee unites and guides the activities of 11 French colonies. The Union publishes four newspapers that are widely circulated in all the French colonies.

The first congress of the Union took place in January 1949 in the city of Abidjan, despite a prohibition by the colonial authorities. It was attended by approximately 700 deputies; the opening of the congress was attended by over 40,000 persons--workers, peasants, the intelligentsia, women and young people. Dudu Hey, vice chairman of the Union and the secretary general of the Democratic Union of Senegal describes the composition of the congress in the following manner:

"These deputies were not new to this struggle. The clothing of many of them was still covered by dust from the roads they had just travelled on their way to the congress. Representatives from the Lake Chad region travelled 3,000 kilometers in order to be present at the congress; they travelled on foot, on trucks, by airplane, in other words this was a real Odyssey. Representatives from Ubanga-Shari had to overcome the resistance of an animose administration. The representatives from the Cameroons travelled on an old boat that delivered them to Tabu (approximately 600 kilometers from Abidjan). The representative from Guinea, pursued by police, had to board a ship in secret. Delegates from Upper Volta have just been released from prison, where they were placed because of their illegal stand and an unfortunate course of events. Bearded, thin, and dusty, they did not even have an opportunity to see their families." The speakers at the congress included some women: Anny Wolberg--a seamstress from Porto Novo, Fadi Mayga from Bobo and others. Fadi Magya called for the emancipation of women. Addressing the men she stated: "I sincerely ask you to remove the

veils and chains from the heads and feet of your women, which they wear through the force of tradition."

In its resolution the delegates welcomed the powerful upsurge of the democratic forces throughout the world and expressed their confidence in an ultimate victory over the forces of imperialism. The congress sent a congratulatory telegram to the French communist party and adopted a resolution to enter into an alliance with it. In concluding the congress the delegates solemnly observed several Leninist days. Humanite, an organ of the French communist party, in its issue of 17 January 1949, wrote about the democratic unification of Africa: "Millions of African inhabitants are following it, struggling against colonial policies and imperialism and, consequently, struggling for peace."

The example set by the Democratic Union of Africa indicates the broad possibilities available in the colonies of South and Tropical Africa for organizing a nationwide unified front, guided by the proletariat and unifying all layers of the society, that are prepared to struggle against imperialism and its lackeys.

The national liberation movement in the British dominion--Union of South Africa, has a long and eventful history. In 1912 an African National Congress was established there. At first it was an organization consisting of tribal chiefs, that have not yet come to terms with imperialism; in a process of complex evolution the Congress transformed into a basis national-reform organization. A communist party was formed in 1921.

The basic content of the anti-imperialist movement in South Africa during the postwar period was a struggle against racial discrimination, for an extension of civil rights to the local population equal to those enjoyed by the European part of the population. The British-Boer imperialist created racist jungles in the Union of South Africa and the local population finds itself actually outside of the law; the slave owners' motto--"divide and rule" was brought to its logical conclusion in that area: the European population is set off against the entire non-European portion of the population, the Bantu are set off against the mulattos ("colored") and Indians, the Basuto are set off against the Zulus, the Zulus against the Bechuana people and so on. One of the heroes of the novel "Thunder Path," written by a South African writer, Peter Abrahams, a Zulu teacher, Mako, says--"The tragedy is that everyone here is first of all a Kafir of colored or an Arab, a Jew, or an Englishman or Chinese or Greek. No one dares to be first of all a human."

The struggle against racial discrimination was therefore always in the center of attention of the democratic forces and the communist party. With the advent of the fascist Malan Party to power, the conditions for the non-European portion of the population became absolutely unbearable. The malanists came to power bearing a slogan proclaiming--"Show the Blacks their Proper Place."

The Malan government liquidated the last few remnants of civil rights that were still available to the local population, and at the same time in the commotion of the anti-communist hysteria they also curtailed the democratic rights of the working portion of the European population.

I shall cite just three examples that characterize the current conditions in the Union of South Africa.

50,000 African miners went on strike for higher wages in August of 1946. The police opened fire on the strikers' meeting--four workers were killed, 41 seriously wounded and 405 slightly wounded. The government (Smuts was then still in power) blamed the communist party for violating the "Law Prohibiting Mutinous Meetings" and sued the entire leadership of the party.

The native worker in South Africa, as commonly known, is paid much less than a European worker, even if he performs the same kind of work. This is a sort of discount for the black color of the skin. In September of 1949 the municipal authorities of Johannesburg raised public transportation fares in the city, but only for the Africans. In this case an extra charge was made for the black color of the skin. The democratic organizations organized a demonstration protesting this new type of racial discrimination. The police opened fire on the demonstration.

A lack of manpower is felt at the European farms. The police arrest Africans for violating any of a great number of regulations, send them to jail and "rent" them out to the farmers. Recently a "Company of Farmers from Leslie for the Supply of Manpower" in East Transvaal built a prison with room for 300 Africans, who will be used for agricultural work. The Company's regulations take into consideration a particularly commercial detail: members of the Company will be provided with manpower from the prison in accordance with the number of shares owned in the Company. Swart, the Minister of Justice attended the opening of the prison, and congratulated the farmers with the establishment of an "exemplary prison."

The communist party under the difficult conditions created by the whims of the police is engaged in determined work designed to consolidate and organize a unified socialist camp, amalgamating all the progressive elements regardless of skin color and mobilizes wide masses of people for the struggle against the fascist Malan government.

The struggle against colonial enslavement encompasses all of the African colonies. The anti-imperialist movement of the people of Tropical and South Africa is developing, expanding, growing and becoming stronger.

The great socialist power--Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--the standard bearer for progress and civilization, serves as an inspiring example for the African people.

"Formerly it was 'accepted thinking' that the world was always divided into the lower and the higher races, into the black and the white people, of whom the former were incapable of becoming

civilized and were condemned to a fate of exploitation, whereas the latter were the sole bearers of civilization, called upon to exploit the former.

At the present time that legend must be considered as having been destroyed and discarded. One of the most important results of the October revolution is the fact that it struck a death blow at that legend, by demonstrating in actual life, how the liberated non-European people, drawn into the mainstream of Soviet development, were able to promote a truly progressive culture and a really progressive civilization no worse than the European people." / See Note /

/ Note / Stalin, I., Sochineniya, Vol. 10, pages 243-244.

The colonizers partitioned their African colonies from the rest of the world with a thick iron curtain. Every truthful story about the country of socialism is regarded as a "strike at the very foundations" and is severely prosecuted. But seeds of the disturbing truth do reach the enslaved people through various channels. The African people already know a lot about the Soviet Union.

Esland Robson, the wife of a well known American fighter for peace and democracy, made a trip through Africa accompanied by her son. In her book describing that voyage she mentions that wherever she went and whoever she talked to from among the plain people, everyone everywhere talked to her about the Soviet Union. "The only lighthouse of hope on the horizon"--this is how she expressed her opinion of such conversations. She spoke a lot about the Soviet Union, about the Stalinist national policy, about the fraternal assistance extended by the Russian people to the backward people, and these stories always made a profound impression on her listeners.

She was asked again and again to talk about that wonderful country, that does not know racial prejudice, nor the exploitation of man by man. "They wanted to know everything about that country, which shows so much concern for the 'children'"--writes E. Robson.

The plain people of Africa know comrade Stalin and know him as a leader, a teacher and friend for all the oppressed and exploited people. Gabriel D'Arbusier, secretary general of the Democratic Union of Africa published an article entitled "A Liberator of the Oppressed" in connection with comrade Stalin's 70th birthday. He wrote about the dream of a plain African to see Africa as well developed and beautiful as the Soviet Union. "At the present time when as we solemnly mark comrade Stalin's 70th birthday, this dream brightly illuminates our struggle for peace and democracy throughout the boundless reaches of Africa.

"We consider it a matter of honor to steadily proceed along a path which was outlined for the oppressed people by the great leader of the Soviet people, the brilliant captain of the army of peace.

"Many years of life and health for Joseph Stalin!"